



In this time of fierce competition and fast moving technology, now more than ever, each of us must take responsibility for our career to guide it through a path that aligns to our personal goals and supports our organization's mission.

Ensuring Your Competitive Advantage

"If you don't know where you are going, any road will do."
- Chinese Proverb

Taking responsibility for our own learning and competency development is absolutely essential to ensure that our skills remain current and relevant. This is fundamental in assisting us reach personal fulfillment through the enrichment of continuous learning. No longer can companies or even the public sector guarantee lifelong employment or a predictable career path. Gone are the days of thinking that we can rely on our manager to look out for our career progression. We are in an environment where seniority plays a lesser role in aiding us move up the career ladder. Knowledge and competency development are essential for career advancement. Developing a well-thought out career progression plan serves a critical role in achieving our professional goals. The acquisition of the right skill sets can only come through personal vigilance and a proactive approach.

Predicting Future Skill Requirements

"If we did all the things we were capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves."
- Thomas Edison

No one knows better than you, your manager or your mentor what your learning needs are and how that learning can be applied to current and future job requirements. Getting involved in professional associations, communities of practice, and keeping up with your professional reading are all ways to identify potential competency areas that need to be developed or strengthened. After establishing your career goal, conducting a competency gap assessment is a key step in developing a sound career progression plan.

Identifying Competency Gaps

Conducting a competency assessment is not an easy undertaking, particularly for civilians. In fact, it can be very difficult, not only must you identify required skill sets and associated competencies, but also a means to rate the actual gap, and a mitigation strategy to eliminate or reduce the gap. For the Department of the Navy IM/IT community, there are tools to assist you. For most

military personnel, a career path is defined and supported throughout the individual's career. All IM/IT workforce personnel can gain career planning assistance through the DON Civilian Career Path Guide and the Civilian Career Planning Tool. Both the document and the Access database file are available at www.don-imit.navy.mil/workforce. For Federal civilian personnel in the GS-2210 series, the Federal IT Roadmap is being developed and integrated into the Federal eTraining initiative at www.golearn.gov. Access www.cio.gov for the latest status and link to the Web-enabled IT Roadmap career planning tool. In addition to these career planning tools, there are some outstanding IM/IT certificate programs available — many at no cost.

Building Your Credentials

"If you believe you can or if you believe you can't, you will be right."
- Henry Ford

The Information Resources Management College (IRMC) of the National Defense University provides the majority of certificate and scholarship programs for the DoD IM/IT workforce. The Information Assurance Scholarship Program (IASP) provides degree completion opportunities for all military and civilian personnel. In addition to IRMC and the IASP, the Federal CIO Council has established a Virtual CIO University consisting of a consortium of universities that offer graduate-level programs that directly address executive core CIO competencies. A synopsis of programs is provided below with detailed information for IRMC programs available at www.ndu.edu/irmc/programs.

CIO Certificate Program

The CIO Certificate Program is an up-to-date source of graduate education for federal CIOs. The program responds to Clinger-Cohen Act requirements to recognize that an individual has received education in the federal CIO competencies. The program is organized around 11 subject areas that relate to CIO competencies. Each area is addressed through one or more courses that are designed as primary or enrichment courses. Courses are designed as 5 days in residence or 10 to 12 weeks in a distributed learning format. The CIO Certificate Program curriculum framework is shown below in Figure 1.

Advanced Management Program

The 14-week graduate level Advanced Management Program (AMP) (curriculum shown in Figure 2) provides both functional and technical information resource managers with an integrated understanding of the Clinger-Cohen Act and other policies, regu-

Figure 1.



Figure 2. Advanced Management Program Curriculum (14 weeks)



lations, imperatives, and ethical standards to allocate and apply information resources to mission requirements. The major focus of the curriculum is the key competency areas required of CIOs and other IRM officials. In addition to the AMP diploma, students also have the opportunity to qualify for the CIO Certificate. Depending on which electives or specialty tracks are selected, graduates may need to earn additional credits after graduation to complete the CIO certificate.

Information Assurance Certification Program

The curriculum for the Information Assurance Certification Program has been certified by the Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS) as being compliant with the NSTISSI No. 4011 Standard for Information Systems Security Professionals. The program entails four intensive courses: *Assuring the Information Infrastructure*, *Global Enterprise Networking and Communications*, *Managing Information Security in a Networked Environment*, and *Developing Enterprise Security Strategies, Guidelines and Policies*.

eGovernment Certificate Program

The eGovernment Leadership Certificate Program...“Facilitating Cross-Boundary Leadership” is designed to facilitate the development of new knowledge, skills, and abilities needed by leaders in the eGovernment and eMilitary arenas. The eGovernment Leadership Certificate Program seeks to develop cross-boundary leadership to achieve the vision and goals of transformation in eGovernment for citizen interaction and customer satisfaction.

The eGovernment Leadership Competencies are shown in Figure 3. The certificate requires completion of eight courses. The

curriculum focuses on cross-boundary leadership, communication, best practices, global perspectives, systems thinking, collaboration, technologies and execution.

Information Assurance Scholarship Program (IASP)

DoD civilian employees, military officers and enlisted members may apply for IA Scholarships through their service community managers through the DON CIO. There are three DoD Centers of Academic Excellence that sponsor graduate programs in information assurance under the IA Scholarship Program. Detailed information is available at www.c3i.osd.mil/iasp. These three institutions are the Information Resources Management College (IRMC) of the National Defense University (NDU), the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT). Typically, new students attend IRMC at NDU prior to attending a Partner University to complete remaining degree requirements or they are directly admitted to NPS or AFIT.

Students who previously completed IRMC requirements may be directly admitted to a Partner University if they meet the admission criteria. A Partner University is a designated IASP Center of Academic Excellence that has agreed to award graduate credits from the IRMC CIO Certificate Program (with NSTISSI 4011 Certification). Partner Universities continue to grow as the program matures. The IASP Web site www.c3i.osd.mil/iasp, is the best source for the most current information.

Virtual CIO University

The Federal CIO University is a virtual consortium of universities that offer graduate-level programs that directly address execu-

Figure 3. The eGovernment Leadership Competencies

Setting New Directions

- Understanding the environment, principles, policies and foundations of eGovernment
- Applying systems thinking to complex eGovernment challenges
- Planning and organizing strategically for eGovernment
- Transforming organizations and cultures to sustain eGovernment

Transforming Processes and Resource Use

- Collaborating across boundaries to achieve eGovernment goals
- Understanding and applying effective architecture and systems for eGovernment
- Using new models to extend human capital for eGovernment
- Planning and managing funds and resources strategically for eGovernment projects and programs
- Managing performance-based eGovernment programs and projects
- Moving from concept to reality

Using Information Strategically

- Providing the right information and knowledge at the right time within and across boundaries
- Balancing security, privacy, access issues and protection of information for eGovernment
- Understanding strategic uses of information through the use of technologies

tive core CIO competencies. The consortium of universities currently includes George Washington, George Mason, Carnegie Mellon, Syracuse and the University of Maryland University College. There are three types of programs. The first is completion of a certificate program, which requires an individual to attend courses in all the Clinger-Cohen areas following the usual requirements for graduate credit. A second format offers an overview of the competencies at a higher level for an executive who needs to understand the broad sweep of the IT functions, but not at the level of detail required of someone working in a CIO organization. Finally, the third option permits individuals to take select courses to focus on specific areas that they need for remediation or update. This is especially valuable for individuals who arrive at the CIO position from other than an IT background. Detailed information is available at www.ciouniversity.cio.gov.

Your Career Progression Plan

Identifying your required competency needs and whether any of the above programs are right for you is a task best completed with the support of your manager or your mentor. At a minimum, your Career Progression Plan should include your goal, prioritized competency needs, developmental options (both formal and informal), desired dates, and estimated costs. Many managers like to also see your past education, training and developmental assignments documented in your plan. All core IM/IT professionals should include in their plans 80 hours of continuous learning as provided in the DON CIO guidance published July 11, 2000.

In this time of exceptional change and reduced resources, the DON workforce must not only be skilled, but also adaptable and flexible in meeting evolving mission demands. Strengthen your competitive advantage by taking charge of your career today, ensuring your skill sets are current and relevant.

"ACTION without vision — is a random activity. VISION without action — is a hallucination."
- Anonymous

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY SIGNS XML POLICY

The Department of the Navy's (DON) continuing efforts to transform its information technology and information management solutions suite took a major step forward with the signing of the DON Extensible Markup Language (XML) policy by DON Chief Information Officer Dave Wennegren on December 13, 2002.

The policy, which replaces an interim policy issued in fall 2001, sets parameters for how the DON will use XML — the technology that facilitates information exchange and interoperability by allowing programmers to assign information tags and attributes to data and documents. It is the first-ever formal XML policy issued by a United States military department.

"Interoperability is a cornerstone of DON efforts to strengthen its interdependent operations and, subsequently, improve the warfighter's ability to find, retrieve, process, and exchange information," said Wennegren in the December policy memorandum. "The Department, like many government and private sector organizations, has increasingly looked to XML technology for its data sharing needs."

In addition to outlining how the Department will use XML to better find, retrieve, process, and exchange data, the policy provides direction to help DON officials manage areas critical to successful XML implementation. These areas include XML technical specifications usage, XML standard components selection, adherence to business standards that define specific XML data vocabularies, and participation in XML-related technical and business standards bodies.

The policy also directs the DONXML Work Group and Functional Area Managers to formally establish XML Functional Namespace Coordinators (FNCs) for the Department's 23 functional areas established in November 2001. As XML vocabulary monitors, FNCs will be responsible for helping to develop, manage, and coordinate DON XML vocabularies, or "namespaces," within their functional areas and across the DON enterprise.

Namespace coordination is vital to XML's success. Inconsistency and a lack of uniformity in XML vocabularies will prevent



systems and applications from easily exchanging information and degrade, rather than enhance, interoperability.

"Successful XML implementation requires a firm commitment to coordination," said Wennegren. "I strongly encourage [commanders] to review and adhere to this policy, which is a crucial part of our work to foster XML coordination among DON programs and commands."

The XML policy is part of a comprehensive Department-wide XML implementation strategy. In 2001, the DON Chief Information Officer created the DONXML Work Group to provide leadership and guidance to the Department's XML efforts through focused action teams.

In addition to the DON XML policy, which names the DONXML Work Group as the Department's interim XML governance structure, other Work Group products have included a vision document outlining the Department's objectives for successful XML implementation across the DON (March 2002) and the XML Developer's Guide, Version 1.1 (May 2002). The XML Developers Guide provides DON developers with important information about XML specifications, component selection/creation, schema design, and component naming conventions.

These and other XML-related documents are available at the Work Group Web site at <https://quickplace.hq.navy.mil/navyxml>.

Go to <https://quickplace.hq.navy.mil/navyxml> for more XML information.

The DONXML Work Group Chairperson is Michael Jacobs. ☐